

APPARATUS FOR AUTOMATICALLY STUFFING FOOD CASING

Abstract of the Disclosure

Apparatus for automatically stuffing tubular food casing with food product. The apparatus includes a stuffing horn through which food product flows into tubular food casing which is deshirred from a shirred food casing stick on the stuffing horn. An input end of the stuffing horn is interconnected with a pressurized source of food product. A clipping device is provided for closing stuffed food casing with a clip and apparatus is preferably provided for causing a tape holding string loops, to be directed toward the clipping device for closing an end of the food casing so that a string loop is transferred directly from the tape into an entry into a channel in the clipping device so that when the end of the food casing is closed with the clip, the clip draws the loop to the casing and holds the loop to the food casing. The apparatus preferably also includes a novel readily cleanable food flow cut-off valve. The clipping device is preferably of sufficiently light weight and is driven by a sufficient power source to obtain a clipping cycle time of less than 3 seconds. A punch and clip anvil is preferably provided to apply clips bent around the casing in essentially mirror image helixes. An extending and retracting conveyor is desirably provided to remove stuffed food product from the vicinity of the clipping device after stuffed food casing is closed. The invention also includes the method for automatically stuffing food casing using the apparatus.